

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD SUMMARY

Thursday, March 4, 2004

SENATE

Measures Introduced:

S. 2163. A bill *to establish a national health program administered by the Office of Personnel Management to offer health benefits plans to individuals who are not Federal employees, and for other purposes*; to the Committee on Finance.

Durbin

Page S 2223, S 2224-25

S. 2168. A bill *to extend the same Federal benefits to law enforcement officers serving private institutions of higher education and rail carriers, that apply to law enforcement officers serving units of State and local government*; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Reed

Pages S 2223, S 2230-31

Remarks:

Outsourcing U.S. Jobs.

"...But I tell you something else that is causing outsourcing and that we have not done anything about. We cannot move forward on a asbestos litigation reform. There are 3,000 or 4,000 people who are tragically sick because of asbestos, but the asbestos trial lawyers have filed class action suits with 700,000 plaintiffs..."

Bond

Pages S 2181-86

The Economy.

"...If you really care about moms and dads and their ability to put food on the table and to work, then figure out a way to pass an energy bill, a highway bill, class action reform, and deal with asbestos reform, which is a critical issue—pay for those who are hurt, but make sure the lack of reform doesn't drive companies under and hurt jobs, hurt the ability for mom and dad to take care of their family..."

Coleman

Page S 2186-87

Asbestos Litigation.

"...Overall, asbestos litigation has already forced at least 70 companies into bankruptcy--causing the loss of many jobs. According to a report by Joseph Stiglitz in 2002, as many as 60,000 jobs have been lost due to asbestos-related bankruptcies. Employees of these bankrupt companies have seen their 401k's drop by an average of 25 percent. According to a 2002 report from the RAND Institute for Civil Justice--a bipartisan group--in 1982, litigation cost American businesses \$1 billion; in 2000, the total cost of litigation rose to \$54 billion; in 2002, litigation costs jumped to over \$70 billion. Forty-seven States--Hawaii, Rhode Island and North Dakota are the only States that do not have a facility affected by asbestos bankruptcy--have at least one facility affected by asbestos bankruptcy. Workers displaced by asbestos bankruptcies have lost \$25,000 to \$50,000 in wages..."

Inhofe

Pages S 2208-9

Committee Meetings:

Committee on Armed Services, Subcommittee on Personnel: Concluded a hearing to examine the Defense Authorization Request for fiscal year 2005, focusing on compensation, benefits, and health care for active and Reserve military personnel and their families.

Page D 182

Committee on the Budget: Committee continued in evening session *to mark up a proposed concurrent resolution setting forth the fiscal year 2005 budget* for the Federal Government.

Page D 183

Committee Meetings (cont.):

Committee on the Judiciary: *Committee ordered favorably reported the nominations of Raymond W. Gruender, of Missouri, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Eighth Circuit, Franklin S. Van Antwerpen, of Pennsylvania, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Third Circuit, Judith C. Herrera, to be United States District Judge for the District of New Mexico, F. Dennis Saylor IV, to be United States District Judge for the District of Massachusetts, Sandra L. Townes, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of New York, Louis Guirola, Jr., to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Mississippi, Virginia E. Hopkins, to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of Alabama, Kenneth M. Karas, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of New York, Ricardo S. Martinez, of Washington, to be United States District Judge for the Western District of Washington, Gene E. K. Pratter, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, Neil Vincent Wake, to be United States District Judge for the District of Arizona, William S. Duffey, Jr., to be United States District Judge for the Northern District of Georgia, and Michele M. Leonhart, of California, to be Deputy Administrator of Drug Enforcement, Domingo S. Herraiz, of Ohio, to be Director of the Bureau of Justice Assistance, LaFayette Collins, to be United States Marshal for the Western District of Texas, and Ronald J. Tenpas, of Illinois, to be United States Attorney for the Southern District of Illinois, all of the Department of Justice.*

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Congressional Program Ahead - Week of March 8 through March 13, 2004:

Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Homeland Security: March 9, To hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates for fiscal year 2005 for border and transportation security, 10 a.m., SD-124.

Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, State, and the Judiciary: March 9, To hold hearings to examine proposed budget estimates for fiscal year 2005 for the Department of Justice, 10:30 a.m., SD-192.

Page D 188

Committee on the Judiciary: March 10, to hold hearings to examine *S.J. Res. 4, proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States authorizing Congress to prohibit the physical desecration of the flag of the United States*, 10 a.m., SD-106.

Page D 189

Committee on the Judiciary: March 10, to hold hearings to examine pending judicial nominations, 2:30 p.m., SD-226.

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HOUSE

Measures Introduced:

H.R. 3893. A bill *to limit the jurisdiction of the Federal courts, and for other purposes*; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Paul

Page H 871

H.R. 3899. A bill to require agencies *to submit to Congress any contracts in amounts greater than \$1,000,000 that are proposed to be awarded using noncompetitive procedures*; to the Committee on Government Reform, and in addition to the Committees on Armed Services, and Rules, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

Boswell

Page H 871

Remarks:

D.C. Circuit Court Ruling Concerning Telecommunications Regulations.

Nunes

Pages E 308-9

We the People Act.

"...The We the People Act forbids federal courts, including the Supreme Court, from adjudicating cases concerning state laws and policies relating to religious liberties or 'privacy,' including cases involving sexual practices, sexual orientation or reproduction. The We the People Act also protects the traditional definition of marriage from judicial activism by ensuring the Supreme Court cannot abuse the equal protection clause to redefine marriage. In order to hold federal judges accountable for abusing their powers, the act also provides that a judge who violates the act's limitations on judicial power shall either be impeached by Congress or removed by the president, according to rules established by the Congress..."

Paul

Page E 309

Judicial Activism, A Grave and Growing Problem.

Lewis

Pages H 845-46

Vice President Cheney's Abuses of Power.

"...I come to the floor this afternoon to urge Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia to recuse himself from a case that the Supreme Court will hear this year regarding Vice President Cheney. I am also here this evening to voice my concern over another example of Vice President Cheney abusing his power as Vice President to continue to keep secret documents that would significantly impact our Nation's future energy policy. Madam Speaker, for 3 years now the Vice President has done everything he can to keep the record of his energy task force secret..."

Pallone

Page H 859-64

Congressional Program Ahead - Week of March 8 through March 13, 2004:

Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Commerce, State, Justice, Judiciary and Related Agencies: March 10, on the Attorney General. H-309 Capitol.

Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Commerce, State, Justice, Judiciary and Related Agencies: March 11, on Federal Judiciary, 10 a.m., H-309 Capitol.

Page D 190

Committee on the Judiciary, Subcommittee on Commercial and Administrative Law: March 9, oversight hearing on the Department of Justice: Executive Office for United States Attorneys, Civil Division, Environment and Natural Resources Division, Executive Office for United States Trustees, and Office of the Solicitor General, 3 p.m., 2141 Rayburn.

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Next Meeting of the SENATE: 12:00 p.m., Monday, March 8, 2004.

Next Meeting of the HOUSE: 12:00 p.m., Monday, March 8, 2004.

AOUSC OLA: Amy Getter-Santos